

Abstract 600

TITLE: Relationship-Based Secondary HIV Prevention in a Primary Care Setting

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ISSUE: An existing program of secondary HIV prevention provided 6 didactic sessions to newly seropositive persons. The program had high drop out rates, and significant participant dissatisfaction was noted in a telephone survey. Program staff therefore had limited contact with HIV+ persons, many of whom were in acute crisis.

SETTING: The prevention program was co-located with the Multnomah County (Portland) Health Department's HIV Health Services Center that provided medical primary care, case management, and behavioral services.

PROJECT: To improve retention in the program, the SPNS-funded NOAH Replication Project assisted prevention staff to revise, implement, and evaluate a open-ended "Wellness" program for persons living with HIV. The revised Wellness Program is based on the SHIP model (Support, Health, Information, and Prevention), and individualized services are provided through a client-centered, trusting relationship designed to meet the self-identified needs of persons living at all stages of HIV disease. Motivational enhancement procedures supplemented by teaching techniques when needed are used to assist individuals to progress along stages of change, make healthy decisions, and develop specific skills (effective barrier use, disclosure of status, sexual negotiation, etc.) needed for adoption of safer sexual and drug use behaviors. Co-location of the Wellness Program with the HIV outpatient clinic facilitates long-term contact with clients, and complements clinic services. Long-term contact is an important aspect of the program because the adoption and generalization of safer behaviors is affected by changing disease, treatment, and personal situations over the course of the illness.

RESULTS: Implementation of the relationship-based program resulted in an increase in the number of kept appointments and periodic contact with individuals over longer time periods. An independent survey and qualitative evaluation found that satisfaction was high, and relationships with the counselor were rated by participants as strong and trusting.

LESSONS LEARNED: An open-ended, relationship-based, client-centered secondary prevention program that included support, information, and other services, improved the attractiveness of prevention services and facilitated long-term contact with HIV-positive persons.

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